DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 062 938 HE 003 060

AUTHOR Hall, William S.; And Others
TITLE Stages in the Development of A Black Identity.
INSTITUTION American Coll. Testing Program, Iowa City, Iowa. Research and Development Div.
PUB DATE 72
NOTE 24p.
AVAILABLE FROM Research and Development Division, The American College Testing Program, P.O. Box 168, Iowa City, Iowa 52240 ($1.00)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Cultural Awareness; *Group Unity; *Negro Attitudes; *Negroes; *Self Concept; Student Attitudes

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the experiment described in this document was to obtain empirical evidence regarding the plausibility of an hypothesis that there are 4 stages in the evolution of black awareness. The first stage is the pre-encounter stage, in which a person is programmed to view and to think of the work world as being nonblack, antiblack, or the opposite of black. Behavior and basic attitudes toward self are determined by the "oppressor's" logic. The second is the encounter stage, in which some experience manages to slip by or even shatter the person's current feelings about himself and his interpretation of the condition of the Negro. In the third stage of immersion, everything of value must be relevant to blackness, and in the final internationalization stage the person focuses on things other than himself and his own ethnic or racial group. One hundred eighty (90 black and 90 white) were tested to explore the hypothesis. Within the limitations of this study, the hypothesis has received general support. (HS)

ED 062938

ACT RESEARCH REPORT

No. 50

50

April 1972

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HE 006 060

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this experiment was to obtain empirical evidence regarding the plausibility of Cross's (1970) hypothesis that there are four stages that can be distinguished by lay observers in the evolution of black awareness in America during recent years.

One-hundred and eighty *S*s were tested in three conditions. Ninety were black and 90 were white.

Within the limitations of the present study, the plausibility of Cross's hypothesis concerning the existence of several stages in the development of black awareness in America has received general positive support.

Prepared by the Research and Development Division
The American College Testing Program

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STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A BLACK IDENTITY

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Since the historic Supreme Court decision of 1954 outlawing segregation in the nation's schools, we have experienced a change in the nature of black-white relations in America. This change has produced many consequences, one of which has been an identity transformation among many American blacks. The transformation has been from an older orientation—in which most blacks viewed themselves as inadequate, inferior, incapable of self-determination, and unable to cope with the intricacies of life in a complex society—to a new one. Through this new orientation, most black Americans view themselves as adequate, self-reliant, assertive, and self-determinative. While several discussions of this change can be found both in scientific and nonscientific literature, empirical evidence documenting it has not been presented. This report explores in a systematic way the changes in black Americans' views of themselves. We desired to test the plausibility of a hypothesis of black identity transformation advanced by Cross (1970) and detailed by Hall and Cross (1970). Put simply, this theory states that many black Americans have gone through four stages of identity development in recent years and that each of these stages can be characterized by certain values. Our purpose here is to test this theory.

Review of Relevant Research and Hypotheses

The literature dealing with an identity transformation among black Americans can be classified into two categories: (a) nonprocess, and (b) process. The nonprocess work (Caplan, 1970) focuses on differences between conservative and militant black Americans in terms of traits, attitudes, and opinions as well as other personal characteristics. Studies representing this point of view concentrate on simple before and after explanations in which

[1]This research report was begun while the senior author was an ACT Postdoctoral Fellow in Iowa City during the summer of 1970. At present, Hall is an Assistant Professor of Psychology, Princeton University. Freedle is with Educational Testing Service, and Cross is a graduate student at Princeton University.

specific and general components of the behavior of nonmilitant persons are contrasted to those of militant ones. On the other hand, the process-oriented works attempt to describe each of several stages, states, or levels that a person or group traverses in identity transformation. The work emanating from this point of view emphasizes the details which a person undergoes during the processes of change. Moreover, it attempts to uncover some of the mechanisms which initiate and consolidate many of the stages. We are concerned with both categories of research but will focus on the process approach, particularly on experimentation that documents the psychological reality of these stages.

Nonprocess

Three examples of work from the nonprocess literature illustrate some of its relevant findings. These examples deal with (a) black militancy, (b) riots, and (c) attitudes of blacks toward whites.

The overall thrust of the nonprocess literature is an attempt to portray a profile of the "average" black (Caplan, 1970; Caplan & Paige, 1968; Marx, 1967; Tomlinson, 1970). Regarding the "average" black militant, this profile can be summarized in the following seven points: (a) militants identify more strongly with black cultural values and civil rights objectives than those Negroes who neither support nor participate in black power activities Caplan & Paige, 1968; Maliver, 1965; Marx, 1967); (b) militants are more accepting of dark skin and other African physical features than are integrationists (Koslin, Cardwell, & Pargament, 1969); (c) militant persons have a heightened sense of personal effectiveness and have made a shift from viewing black people as the problem to viewing white people and white institutions as the problem (Bennett, 1969; Forward & Williams, 1970; Gurin, Gurin, Lau, & Beattie, 1969); (d) militants tend to be more aggressive and assertive than nonmilitants and are more willing to venture into high risk militant activities for the accomplishment of group goals (Tomlinson, 1970), including risk of death (Hahn, 1970); (e) although not antiwhite or "reverse racist," black militants are more hostile toward white oppression than are uncommitted or conservative Negroes (Marx, 1967; Tomlinson, 1970); (f) militants reject white leadership and white participation in black organizations and actively pursue black self-determination, shared power, and black unity (Dizard, 1970); and (g) militants have rejected socialization models that picture blacks in a negative way and that stress the need for blacks to accommodate, and in contrast the militants have emphasized the task of creating positive black and assertive identification models (Caplan, 1970).

While not as detailed, many studies on riots bear a resemblance to research on black militancy. Several of these studies have sought to interpret those factors that explain the cause of riots. Early interpretations rely heavily on such factors as relative deprivation, rising expectations, and reactions to economic impoverishment (for example, Orum & Orum, 1968). More recent works stress cognitive-perceptual and cultural-personality factors in interpreting origins of black revolt (for example, Dizard, 1970; Gerlach & Hine, 1970; Thomas, 1971). Although informative, these studies attempt to draw conclusions based on typologies or polarities and so appear incomplete.

After reviewing the empirical literature on the attitudes of blacks toward whites, Caplan (1970) poses the question, "Do black pride and the desire for black self-development go hand-in-hand with white hatred?" He argues through to the following conclusion: "Although there are some slight inconsistencies in the findings, in general, militancy does not appear associated with increased hostility toward whites . . . [p. 67]." When militancy is viewed within the context of a multistage (Negro-to-Black) conversion, it appears that intense hostility toward whites is frequently associated with persons who have just encountered militancy, while internalization of values, ideologies, and attitudes associated with blackness are paralleled by *decreases* in antiwhite feelings (Cross, 1970, 1971; Marx, 1967; Thomas, 1971).

Process

As we turn to the process-oriented literature, it is important to bear in mind that our primary concern is with transformations of the way in which blacks see themselves as persons. Studies that present a step-by-step explanation of what has been called the Negro-to-Black transformation will be emphasized. Most of the research is reported in the form of models (or hypotheses) and reflects a wide range of thought in the social sciences. Specifically, we will be concerned with the work of Crawford and Naditch (1970), Wallace (1964), Sherif and Sherif (1970), Thomas (1971), and Cross (1970), respectively.

The first and perhaps most popular models created to explain the contemporary black movement were based on notions of relative deprivation and social deviancy (Crawford & Naditch, 1970). These researchers developed a rather complex model integrating concepts of social defiance, external-internal locus of control, and relative deprivation (see Table 1). Each stage is defined by five factors: (a) ideal-real goal discrepancy or perceived relative deprivation, (b) perceived locus of control, (c) psychological content, (d) characteristics of society, and (e) behavior of the oppressed group. In the first stage, Negroes are seen as being rather passive, content, and fatalistic, with power and control located "outside" their community. Society is described as being stable for it is in control of the situation. The second stage represents that point at which a significant number of Negroes begins to perceive the discrepancy between their living conditions and the life style of white Americans. Control is still seen as something "outside" the domain of Negroes; thus, the period is defined as "discontent fatalism." Awareness of deprivation coupled with a sense of powerlessness results in expressive, explosive, and spontaneous outbreaks of violence. In the third stage, a large gap between desires and accomplishments remains, but Negroes are active in programs that are expected to resolve problems. Depending upon the flexibility and receptiveness of society, the strategies of Negroes will be either reform oriented or revolu-

TABLE 1

An Ends-Means Sequential Stages Typology of the Psychology of Social Change[a]

Ideal-Real Goal Discrepancy	Perceived Locus of Means Control	
	External Control	Internal Control
Low	(1) Psychological stage: CONTENT FATALISM Society: TRADITIONAL Behavior: PASSIVE	(4) Psychological stage: CONTENT ACTIVISM Society: STABLE Behavior: REACTIVE
High	(2) Psychological stage: DISCONTENT FATALISM Society: UNSTABLE Behavior: EXPRESSIVE	(3) Psychological stage: DISCONTENT ACTIVISM Society: TRANSITIONAL Behavior: INSTRUMENTAL

[a]Thomas J. Crawford and Murray Naditch. Relative deprivation, powerlessness, and militancy. *Journal of Psychiatry*, 1970, 33, 208-223.

tionary. The final stage assumes resolution of problems coupled with perceived internal locus of control. The overall society is seen as stable, with occasional reactions that tend toward reform of the existing system.

Wallace (1964) has elaborated a different model of culture change from the perspective of anthropology. Wallace's model was a two-pronged one which considered culture change either over long periods of time (macro-temporal) or over very brief periods (micro-temporal). Under the latter, he discussed "Revitalization Processes," which are believed by Hall (1967) to depict the contemporary black movement. Revitalization Processes encompass five stages: (a) steady state, (b) period of increased individual stress, (c) period of cultural distortion, (d) period of revitalization, and (e) new steady state. Wallace (1956, 1964) suggested that two concepts are extremely important in the Revitalization Process. He calls them mazeway resynthesis and hysterical conversion. The former represents a "new way" of viewing old problems while the latter typifies mass following.

A more contemporary view of the black movement in America can be found in the work of Sherif and Sherif (1970). These researchers view the black movement, particularly black unrest, as a social movement toward an emerging self-identity. They emphasized that the black movement is concerned not only with economic and environmental inequities but also with issues relating to identity. Moreover, they argued that the importance of identity is shown by two prominent patterns in the activities, functions, and rhetoric of black power advocates: (a) dissociation from white standards, institutions, and values which promote black inferiority; and (b) turning toward other nonwhite people in different parts of the world, particularly Africa, for a frame of reference to replace the one which they have rejected.

The analysis presented by Sherif and Sherif (1970) is important for it explicitly deals with what might be called black identity issues, i.e., feelings of inferiority as well as rejection of white standards and the search for a new referent. Moreover, these researchers suggested that black pride is not created in a vacuum. Feelings of inferiority and shame lead to guilt and rage, which in turn are recoded into feelings of black pride; and if all goes well, pride is eventually internalized as self-confidence and a modified self-concept. In this sense the *affect* underlying each of several stages appears to undergo its own systematic development.

Thomas (1971) has developed hypotheses concerning the stages through which blacks pass in working out their identity as black persons. He believes that few black people can claim that they have always been black. Moreover, he asserts that most Negroes have suffered from what is called "Negromachy" prior to the Negro-to-Black identity movement. "Negromachy" is marked by confusion of self-worth and shows dependency upon white society for definition of self. Thomas believes that Afro-Americans must first withdraw into themselves before renegotiating relationships with other racial and ethnic groups.

The period of *withdrawal* marks but the first stage of the five that Thomas hypothesizes as depicting the steps blacks take in seeking a new racial identity. *Testifying* to all the pain previously endured in denying himself as a person represents the second stage. Another part of the second stage is learning to express one's anxieties about becoming black. *Information processing* around black cultural heritage marks the third stage. The information processing in which the person engages leads directly into the fourth stage, *activity*. Here the person works through a particular group to find a link to the larger black experience. The fifth and final stage is called *transcendental*—through his unique blackness the person loses his "hangups" about race, age, sex, and social class and sees himself as a part of humanity in all of its flavors.

A similar stage hypothesis concerning black identity is that formulated by Cross (1970) and detailed by Hall and Cross (1970). Through a careful analysis of his observations of a wide segment of the black American community, Cross hypothesized there exists a series of well-defined stages through which black Americans pass when they encounter blackness in themselves. Moreover, he speculates that as a result of this encounter and its subsequent resolution, the person defines himself as a black, adequate, and noninferior person. The stages have been designated as follows: (a) pre-encounter, (b) encounter, (c) immersion, and (d) internalization.

The analysis by Cross seems to take account of most of the considerations other investigators have

TABLE 2

Items and Stages Representing the Cross Hypothesis

Stage	Item
Pre-encounter: (In this stage, a person is programmed to view and to think of the world as being nonblack, antiblack, or the opposite of black. Behavior and basic attitudes toward self are determined by the "oppressor's" logic.)	1. This person believes that the world is, and should be, guided by American-European concepts; i.e., the sum total of his experiences, perceptions, and dominated by a white racist orientation. 2. This person believes that to be black is to be lowdown and dirty. 3. This person believes that black people came from a strange, uncivilized dark continent and that the black search for historical relevance began around 1865. 4. This person believes that the white esthetic is superior to the black one; e.g., deifies white womanhood, uses traditional white modes of expression, etc. 5. This person believes that the white man is superior intellectually, technically mystical, and capable of understanding him. 6. This person believes that large numbers of blacks are untrustworthy. 7. This person believes that incorporation, integration, or assimilation is the black man's most effective weapon for solving his problems.
Encounter: (In this stage, some experience manages to slip by or even shatter the person's current feelings about himself and his interpretation of the condition of the Negro.)	8. This person believes that the world should be interpreted from a black perspective. 9. This person believes that he should validate himself as a black person and that he has many strengths. 10. This person's beliefs make him feel guilty and anxious; consequently, he is hurled into a frantic, determined, obsessive search for black identity. 11. This person feels with great force what being black in America means.

[Continued]

TABLE 2 *(Continued)*

Immersion: (During this period everything of value must be relevant to blackness.)	12. This person involves himself in a world of blackness: e.g., he participates in political meetings, rapping sessions, black theatre, seminars, art shows, television programs, etc. 13. This person undergoes a liberation from whiteness and an involvement in blackness. 14. This person feels and behaves as if the white world, culture, and persons are dehuman: e.g., whites become honkies, pigs, devils, etc., to him. 15. This person behaves as if he feels that everything black is good. 16. This person hungrily consumes black literature and devotes much contemplation to the forms of being black: e.g., he wears dashikies, cultivates an Afro, takes on an African name, etc. 17. This person turns inward and withdraws from everything that is white. 18. This person frequently confronts the system and the man. 19. This person behaves in such a way as to indicate that he fears neither control nor oppressive techniques, nor death. 20. This person feels an overwhelming attachment to all black people. 21. This person feels excitement and joy in black surroundings. 22. This person begins to see whites as just people with the strengths and limitations that this perception implies. 23. This person engages in a cultural analysis of black life style. 24. This person comes to accept certain factors about the black experience and drops others. 25. This person behaves as if he has accepted certain factors that help explain the experience of being black in America and incorporates these into a style of life which forms the basis for a new life style.

[Continued]

TABLE 2 *(Continued)*

Internalization: (In this stage, the person focuses on things other than himself and his own ethnic or racial group.)	26. This person behaves as if he has an inner security and satisfaction with himself. 27. This person behaves as if he feels a great love and compassion for all oppressed people. 28. This person actively participates in the community for the purpose of making it better, i.e., a collectivistic orientation with a commitment to the development of black power dominates the person's behavior.

cited. His hypothesized stages of black identity development are studied in this report. Items based on the work of Cross which characterize the four stages are given in Table 2.

It is apparent that Cross and Thomas observing the black American scene and working independent of each other have formulated hypotheses of racial identity very much alike. Thomas's *testifying stage* is very similar to the *encounter stage* as formulated by Cross. *Immersion* and *activity* also seem highly similar. *Transcendental* and *internalization* also have a common ring.

The review of the literature on the process of black identity development is useful in that it provides us with many ideas which can serve as a basis for research. While the fact that a transformation in blacks' self-awareness has occurred will be readily acknowledged by most people, this fact does not in itself verify the discrete stage notion; nor does it verify the particular values and ideas which are asserted by Cross and others to be characteristic of each stage. To merely list some values and ideas which are believed to underlie or characterize each stage brings us *closer* to the goal of empirically establishing the psychological reality of this phenomenon but does not finish the job. What is needed is an empirical approach that will allow psychologists to study the idea of "stages" with respect to blacks' recent experience and an approach that may indicate which of several alternative models of the process best correspond with what actually happens.

An Empirical Test of the Plausibility of Cross's Hypothesis

Our approach will be to test the ideas of Cross by what can be called consensual validation. Suppose we agree that black college students have had intimate knowledge and experience with the four stages, i.e., they currently know many Negroes and blacks, some of whom might still be in Stage 1, and some in Stage 2, etc. It is not essential that we assume that college blacks are themselves in the fourth stage in order to perform adequately in our experiment. What *does* appear crucial is the assumption that, in all likelihood, they do know or have known individuals who have been through several of these stages. In this way the blacks who served as our *S*s have come to store up numerous facts and impressions about the behavior of individuals who have gone through some or all of these stages.

Now suppose these *S*s are presented with statements which Cross believes to be characteristic of the stages of black identity transformation. If these statements are accurate reflections of beliefs about the identity process, then it should be possible to show high agreement among the black *S*s regarding which items belong together (tend to occur together) at different periods in the development of black identity. Furthermore, it may be possible to determine how many of these stages exist by appropriate experimental manipulations.

Purpose

The purpose of this experiment was to obtain empirical evidence regarding the plausibility of Cross's (1970) hypothesis that there are four stages (see Table 2) which can be distinguished by lay observers in the evolution of black America's awareness during recent years.

While our main interest was the rather distinct stages of belief systems that may be identified in the recent unfolding of black awareness by using black college students' judgments, we also considered the responses of white *S*s in the same experimental setting. The purpose of the latter condition was to gain insight into the degree to which *S*s who have not directly participated in the search for black identity may yet be cognizant of these general stages and reveal this knowledge by producing patterns of responses similar to those given by the black *S*s.

Materials and Procedure

The 28 items suggested by Cross as representing the different beliefs and activities of the four stages listed in Table 2 were each typed on separate 3 x 5 inch index cards and presented to *S*s for sorting (see Tables 3-4). The effect of three experimental conditions on the sorting of these cards was studied (Conditions A, B, and C).

The Conditions

• *Condition A.* This condition placed the fewest constraints on the *S*s who sorted the cards. The *S*s were instructed as follows: "On these cards you will find some items descriptive of a person—taken together many of these items form clusters. We want you to cluster the items according to whether a person would believe all of the items that are in the cluster at a particular point in his life—whereas the items in another cluster would tend to be believed by him at some other point in his life. After sorting the items into clusters, indicate the order in which you feel these clusters occur in time." The *S*s were further asked to think of a name for each of the clusters; i.e., they were asked for the reason why they thought the items belonged together.

• *Condition B.* This condition placed somewhat greater constraints on the students than did Condition A. Condition B started out with the same instructions as Condition A. Following this first sort, the *S*s were asked if there were any meaningful way in which they could recombine or group together the clusters from their first sort so that just *four* clusters remained. If the *S* had already produced four clusters on his first sort, the session was terminated. Following each sort, the *S*s were again asked to order the clusters with respect to their temporal sequence and were also asked to give a reason for each group of items which they produced.

• *Condition C.* This condition placed the greatest constraints upon the *S*s. Four boxes were placed in front of the *S*. Each box had placed next to it a label which described the nature of each of the four stages and the order in which they were believed to occur as expressed by Cross's hypothesis (see Table 2 for descriptions of the stages). The descriptions which followed each label were aimed at clarifying the meaning of each stage (and hence served to remove much of the uncertainty as to what the sorting task was all about).

Subjects

A total of 180 *S*s were tested in all. There were 90 black college students and 90 white college students. Within each group of 90, 30 were tested in Condition A, 30 in Condition B, and 30 in

TABLE 3

Summary of Item Responses

Proportion of 60 students who placed this item in stages A, B, C, or D								Item description
Blacks				Whites				
A	*B*	*C*	*D*	*A*	*B*	*C*	*D*	
883	067	017	033	900	033	033	033	1. "... the world is, and should be, guided by American-European concepts ...."
967	017	000	017	967	017	000	017	2. "... to be black is to be lowdown and dirty."
950	017	000	033	817	117	050	017	3. "... black people came from a strange, uncivilized dark continent ...."
933	033	017	017	983	000	000	017	4. "... white esthetic is superior to the black one ...."
950	017	000	033	902	016	016	066	5. "... white man is superior intellectually, technically mystical, and capable of understanding him."
949	017	017	017	917	033	000	050	6. "... large numbers of blacks are untrustworthy."
593	271	068	068	467	017	100	317	7. "... incorporation, integration, or assimilation is the black man's most effective weapon for solving his problems."
033	098	721	148	033	283	583	100	8. "... interprets the world from a black perspective."
017	339	322	322	000	407	390	203	9. "... validate[s] himself as a black person ...."
233	450	233	083	117	567	300	017	10. "... feel[s] guilty and anxious; consequently, he is hurled into a frantic, determined, obsessive search for black identity."
000	390	169	441	017	333	267	383	11. "... feels with great force what being black in America means."
017	100	717	167	000	233	650	117	12. "... involves himself in a world of blackness: e.g., he participates in political meetings, rapping sessions ...."
017	186	644	153	033	283	633	050	13. "... undergoes a liberation from whiteness ...."
067	200	500	233	067	283	533	117	14. "... feels and behaves as if the white world, culture, and persons are dehuman ...."
000	183	700	117	000	283	583	133	15. "... feels that everything black is good."
033	200	650	117	000	317	650	033	16. "... consumes black literature and devotes much contemplation to the forms of being black ...."
083	200	533	183	067	317	500	117	17. "... turns inward and withdraws from everything that is white."
068	237	339	356	067	200	267	467	18. "... frequently confronts the system and the man."
033	167	250	550	033	133	300	533	19. "... indicate[s] that he fears neither control nor oppressive techniques nor death."
000	133	417	450	017	333	550	100	20. "... feels an overwhelming attachment to all black people."
017	133	500	350	017	350	450	183	21. "... feels excitement and joy in black surroundings."
083	317	017	483	033	250	267	450	22. "... begins to see whites as just people with the strengths and limitations that this perception implies."
000	283	500	217	000	525	288	186	23. "... engages in a cultural analysis of black life style."
083	367	200	350	016	197	246	541	24. "... comes to accept certain factors about the black experience and drops others."
067	217	217	500	000	117	200	683	25. "... has accepted certain factors that help explain the experience of being black in America and incorporated these into a style of life which forms the basis for a new life style."
050	083	167	700	082	033	082	803	26. "... behaves as if he has an inner security and satisfaction with himself."
033	167	217	583	000	100	100	767	27. "... feels a great love and compassion for all oppressed people."
000	050	367	583	000	033	233	733	28. "... actively participates in the community for the purpose of making it better, i.e., a collectivistic orientation with a commitment to the development of black power dominates the person's behavior."

Note.—Items 1 through 7 correspond to Cross's first stage; items 8 through 11 correspond to his second stage; items 12 through 25 to his third stage; and items 26 through 28 to his fourth stage. The underlined numbers represent the modal responses for each item for blacks and whites considered separately. One can see an impressive similarity between which stages are considered as the modal response for virtually all items except items 20, 23, and 24. Notice too that we can revise Cross's hypothesis regarding which particular items belong in each of the four stages by using the modal judgments of the 60 black students. For example, under the revised hypothesis we should place items 1 through 7 in the first stage (this exactly coincides with Cross's first stage). Items 9, 10 and 24 would go in the second stage; items 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, and 23 would go in the third stage; and items 11, 18, 19, 20, 22, 25, 26, 27, and 28 would go in the fourth stage.

Condition C. Finally, each group of 30 was equally divided, with 15 female and 15 male students being represented. Each *S* was tested individually. The test session for each condition lasted about an hour.

Results and Discussion

• *Conditions B (4-cluster sortings) and C.* These two conditions will be analyzed because they provided us with the most detailed information regarding the distribution of the items with respect to each of the four hypothetical stages. For purposes of illustrating the method of analysis in a clear manner, let us suppose that Cross had used only 6 items (A, B, C, D, E, F) instead of 28 and had grouped them into just two temporal stages such that A and B were items which belonged to the first stage and items C, D, E, and F belonged to the second stage. Now suppose that a student who was asked to sort these 6 items into two clusters placed items A, B, and C into the first cluster and items D, E, and F into the second. Also suppose that he ordered the two clusters with respect to which occurred first in time. Because the *S* had ordered the cluster to correspond to a time scale, we would be able to assign a median rank to each item that occurred in the first cluster and another median rank to each item that was placed in the second cluster. For example, items A, B, and C would each get a median rank of "2" and items D, E, and F would each get a median rank of "5." We could assign median ranks as well to the 6 items grouped according to our much-simplified Cross hypothesis. Because only items A and B were placed in the first stage (by the simplified Cross hypothesis), each item would receive a median rank of "1.5" while the remaining four items would receive a median rank of "4.5." The rank order correlation between this *S*'s clustering responses and the simplified Cross hypothesis could be readily computed.

Now let us carry the argument one step further. If instead of just one student's responses we considered 30 students' responses to each of these 6 items, we could summarize the group data in the following way. For item A, we could indicate how many *S*s placed it into the first stage and how many placed it in the second stage by the notation (20, 10), in which the first number indicates, for example, that 20 *S*s placed item A in the first cluster and the remaining 10 placed it in the second cluster. The modal response for item A would be the first cluster (stage) because the greatest number of *S*s placed it in this first stage. Similarly for item B, suppose we have (18, 12); then the modal response for this item is also the first stage, etc. The point of this argument is that by using the group data we could also calculate the rank order correlation of these data with the simplified Cross hypothesis. This process greatly simplified the presentation of the data. With the full 28 items and four stages within which to distribute the *S*s responses, there were very few ties (only 3 ties occurred out of 224 decisions in assigning a modal response). For these ties, the "modal" stage was chosen randomly.

The rank order correlations with the 28-item Cross hypothesis for each of eight groups of *S*s (male and female white *S*s in Condition B, male and female black *S*s in Condition B, male and female white *S*s in Condition C, male and female black *S*s in Condition C) can be found in Table 4. All correlations between each of the eight groups and the Cross hypothesis were significant well beyond the .01 level. Only one of the eight groups seemed to produce a slightly lower correlation with the Cross hypothesis (Group "O," white females in Condition B). What is also of note in Table 4 is that the intercorrelations between each pair of the groups of *S*s were generally very high. What might have been expected is that the intercorrelations between the four groups run within the same condition would be higher than correlations across groups from different conditions. Little evidence was found for this viewpoint. It appears that, despite the fact that *S*s in Condition C were provided with labels for each of the four stages as well as information about the temporal *order* in which these were believed to occur, their correlations with the Cross hypothesis were at about the same magnitude as *S*s in Condition B.

The tentative conclusion reached at this point was that using just the modal response data, we had found significant confirmatory evidence favoring the general ideas of Cross. However, the fact that none of the correlations was perfect indicated that some differences must be occurring within each of the eight groups of *S*s. These differences relate to how many items tend to be

placed within each of the allowable four stages as well as to what particular items were being placed in each of these four stages.

In order to gain further insight into the source of these differences, a more detailed comparison across items was made. This analysis focused on possible differences in black-white response patterns for each item within and across Conditions B and C. In the interest of providing a more stable response pattern base, the male and female frequency data of Conditions B and C were combined. These pooled data were used for the remainder of the analyses.

TABLE 4

Rank Order Correlation[a] of Each of Eight Groups with the Cross Hypothesis and with Each Other

	Condition B				Condition C				Cross hypothesis
	Whites		*Blacks*		*Whites*		*Blacks*		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
	N	*O*	*P*	*Q*	*R*	*S*	*T*	*U*	*V*
N	1.000	.715	.743	.922	.918	.929	.763	.876	.840
O	.715	1.000	.596	.668	.699	.661	.491	.756	.560
P	.743	.596	1.000	.799	.831	.714	.790	.737	.750
Q	.922	.668	.799	1.000	.920	.893	.705	.831	.810
R	.918	.699	.831	.920	1.000	.897	.798	.830	.820
S	.929	.661	.714	.893	.897	1.000	.776	.807	.850
T	.763	.491	.790	.705	.798	.776	1.000	.697	.860
U	.876	.756	.737	.831	.830	.807	.697	1.000	.730
V	.840	.560	.750	.810	.820	.850	.860	.730	1.000

[a]A correlation of .448 is needed to be significant at the .01 level (one-tailed test).

• *Condition B: Black-white comparisons (4-cluster data only).* Of 28 item comparisons which tested differences in patterns of clustering between black and white *S*s, only item 7 produced a significant difference by application of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov 2-sample test ($p < .01$). This item asserts that " . . . incorporation, integration, or assimilation is the black man's most effective weapon for solving his problems." The 30 black *S*s perceived this as belonging primarily to the first developmental stage (pre-encounter) while the 30 whites were equally split in believing that this item could represent an early stage or a late stage; none of the remaining 27 produced a difference ($p > .05$). The reader should note that this significant difference for item 7 cannot necessarily be inferred from the data summarized in Table 3 because Table 3 pools the data across Conditions B and C.

• *Condition C: Black-white comparisons.* This condition produced more significant differences in the item responses of blacks and whites. The

Kolmogorov-Smirnov 2-sample test was again used on each of the 28 items.

Item 20 was different at the .01 level. Whites placed this item primarily in the third stage (immersion) while blacks attributed this belief mainly to the fourth stage (internalization).

Item 24 was significantly different at the .05 level. The whites' modal response placed this item in the fourth stage whereas blacks revealed a bimodal response pattern by placing it equally often in the second and fourth stages. (It is possible that this item may have an ambiguous reading since it does not assert which specific factors are to be accepted and which are to be dropped.)

Finally item 28 produced a significant difference at the .05 level. This difference, however, is less interesting than the previous differences found because both blacks and whites gave the fourth stage as their modal response category. The difference was presumably due to the unequal variances of the two frequency distributions (the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is sensitive not only to differences in central tendency of the respective frequency distributions but also to relative variance, skewness, etc.).

• *Comparisons across Conditions B and C.* So far, we have concentrated on item differences attributable to different groups of students. One can also inquire whether significant item differences can be found when comparing across Conditions B and C. One might expect differences to occur for the following reasons: When a semantic label for each of the four stages is provided (as occurred in Condition C), this should greatly decrease whatever ambiguity there is to the sorting task. The consequence of reducing the ambiguity or uncertainty is that more students should agree to place a particular item into just *one* of the stages. That is to say, if a particular item *does* belong to (or is characteristic of) a particular stage, then providing information about the meaning of this stage should help to increase the number of students who will realize that this item matches or belongs to this particular stage. This possibility was investigated from two points of view. The first examined whether a difference in the frequency distributions of each item was significant across Conditions B and C. The second approach tested directly the implication that the modal frequency of each item in Condition C was significantly larger than its corresponding modal frequency in Condition B by using 4-cluster data only.

The frequency distributions of the 30 black students in Condition B were compared with the frequency distributions of the 30 black students from Condition C, item for item. Of the 28 Kolmogorov-Smirnov 2-sample tests only 2 were significant, items 14 ($p < .05$) and 27 ($p < .05$). Of these 2, only item 14 involved a change in modal response category. Condition B produced a modal response for the fourth stage, while Condition C produced a modal response for the third stage.

The frequency distributions of the 30 white *S*s in Condition B were also compared with the 30 white *S*s of Condition C using the same test. Five of the 28-item comparisons were found to be significantly different from chance. These were items 13, 15, 16, 27, and 28. Only one of these five involved a change in the modal response (item 15), where the second stage was modal for Condition B while the third stage was modal for Condition C.

Although there were more items which yielded significant differences than could be attributed to chance, the failure of these differences to form any *systematic* pattern across conditions and across black-white comparisons suggested that most of these differences may not be very important in terms of what impact they have on the main hypothesis concerning the existence of several stages underlying the development of black awareness. The few differences found between the black and white students, however, may be important for reasons other than the stages hypotheses.

We then considered a second approach in evaluating differences between Conditions B and C. The prediction here was that the modal frequencies in Condition C would be greater than the corresponding modal in Condition B. (Only those items which share the same modal category were considered for this test.) A sign test of this difference, using the black *S*s' responses across the two conditions, was significant ($p = .022$). A similar sign test using only the white *S*s' responses across the same conditions was also significantly different from chance ($p = .001$). Thus, this result indicated that the ability to place an item into its correct

stage was significantly increased by having available a semantic label for each stage.

• *Existence of a generalization gradient among the four stages.* If we suppose that the four stages can be ordered along a one-dimensional scale, then it is possible to argue that different amounts of confusion should exist especially between adjacent stages on this one dimension. The degree of this confusion will depend in part upon how close together these stages are located on this dimension, such that, if they are very close together they will tend to be confused more often than if they are far apart. Let us consider this notion in more detail. Suppose that a particular item is known to belong to the third stage. Now consider a large number of *S*s who pick up this item and are about to place it into one of the four clusters. Most of the *S*s should place the item correctly, but when an error occurs, it is more likely that they will misplace the item in a stage which is *closest* (in the temporal scale sense) to the "correct" stage. Thus, if the third stage is known to be "correct," then most of the items will be placed in the third stage (it will be the modal stage); and the next most frequent entry will be for either stage two or four (because they are nearest to stage three on the time scale). Finally, the least frequent entry of placing this item will be for the first stage. To give another example, if the "correct" stage is known to be the fourth one, then the greatest proportion of *S*s will place this item in the fourth category, the next largest proportion will be for the third category, next largest the second, and the smallest will be the first category.

In order to evaluate this idea against the present set of data, we must be able to estimate the degrees to which this generalization gradient around the "correct" stage could occur by chance alone. This is easy to determine. Let us use the integers "1," "2," "3," and "4" to represent four different magnitudes. There are 24 different ways to permute these four different magnitudes. They are as follows: 1234, 1243, 1324, 1342, 1423, 1432, 2134, 2143, 2314, 2341, 2413, 2431, 3124, 3142, 3214, 3241, 3412, 3421, 4123, 4132, 4213, 4231, 4312, and 4321. There are exactly eight of these 24 permutations which satisfy the concept of a generalization gradient and they are all underlined in the above sequence. Let us explain why the second entry (1243) satisfies the generalization gradient idea. The largest number in this is "4," and it occurs in the third position (this corresponds to saying that the modal response is for the third stage). The next largest number, "3," is adjacent to "4"; the third largest number, "2," is also adjacent to "4"; while the smallest number, "1," is farthest from "4." Hence, all these magnitudes *decrease* quite regularly around the largest (modal) number. The same is true for all the underlined numbers in the above sequence. Since there are exactly 8 out of 24 possible orderings which satisfy the gradient on the basis of chance alone, the expected proportion due to chance is equal to .333. Table 5 shows that the data yield proportions well above this base line. By a sign test using the 8 groups of *S*s, this result is significant at the $p = .004$ level. Hence, our data clearly give evidence for the presence of a generalization gradient around the "correct" modal responses. (In this test, only those items which gave four distinct numbers were included in determining the observed proportion; i.e., tied entries were not allowed since they greatly

Table 5

Evidence for the Existence of a Generalization Gradient for Each of Eight Groups of *S*s

Group of *S*s	Obtained proportion of items showing the generalization gradient	Expected proportion of items showing the gradient due to chance
Condition B:		
Black males	.769	.333
Black females	.684	.333
White males	.933	.333
White females	.789	.333
Condition C:		
Black males	.812	.333
Black females	.625	.333
White males	.750	.333
White females	.692	.333

Note.—A sign test (one-tailed) which compares the direction of the obtained proportion with the proportion expected by chance alone indicates that the above evidence in favor of the existence of the generalization gradient is significant at the .004 level.

complicate carrying out the above test.) By a further inference, the existence of this generalization gradient implies that these four stages do lie on a temporal scale with the earliest stage lying at one extreme of the scale (the pre-encounter stage). The next stage being located to the right of it then would be the encounter stage, and to the right of the encounter stage would be the immersion stage, and finally at the other end of the scale would be the internalization stage.

Thus, one conclusion that can be drawn from this result about the existence of the generalization gradient is that the *S*s in the experiment have properly ordered the items representing the four stages according to Cross's original hypothesis. Had they not ordered the stages in the correct temporal order, the generalization test would have failed to be significant.

● *A revised item list for the four Cross stages.* We have already pointed out that general support for the plausibility of Cross's hypothesis can be inferred from the large significant rank order correlations reported earlier in this report. However, the more detailed item analyses and the modal response patterns (especially those of the 60 blacks' responses given in Table 3) indicated that some revision or restatement of Cross's hypothesis should be considered. First of all, the present modal data suggested that the following items should be in each of the four stages: Stage 1 should include items 1 through 7 (this exactly coincides with Cross's originally suggested grouping); Stage 2 should include items 9, 10, and 24; Stage 3 should include items 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, and 23; and Stage 4 should include items 11, 18, 19, 20, 22, 25, 26, 27, and 28. Although the white *S*s' modal responses suggested a rather similar reordering, it is open to question whether their perception of the items (and their lack of firsthand experience with these stages) was as accurate as that of the black students. Hence, we do not list here the ordering of Cross's hypothesis using the white students' data—the interested reader is referred to the summary data in Table 3.

● *Suggested revisions in the statement of the item content.* At various points in this report we have suggested there may be difficulty in interpreting the intent of some of the items. This difficulty was pointed out when significant differences were found between black and white response patterns for particular items. We wish to consider the nature of some possible revisions here.

In particular, item 9 is unusual in the sense that the black *S*s tended to place it about equally often in each of the last three stages. (A similar tendency was noted for the whites; see Table 3.) This result suggests that the item is *not* clearly indicative of any single stage but rather is an activity that would be true equally well of all three of the last stages. Hence, future studies of the present kind should consider eliminating this item. That is, when the research focuses upon items which are diagnostic of particular stages (and uses item responses to infer the existence of the "stage" concept), it is desirable to choose items which tend to be exclusively placed into just one stage category.

Item 11 also appears to yield an unusual frequency pattern; while the modal response was the fourth stage for both blacks and whites, the second most frequent response was the second stage. Apparently this item had an ambiguous meaning primarily because it did not focus our attention on any single attribute of "... what being black in America means." Hence, this item either should be clarified by listing particular attributes or should be deleted in future tests.

Another criticism of the item content is that some items tended to be stated in what has been called a "double-barreled" form. For example, item 19 asserted three different attributes as if they necessarily must go together. Yet it seems quite possible that some individuals who find themselves in this fourth stage (the modal responses indicate that this item belongs to the fourth stage primarily) might agree to the assertion that they do not fear "control" or "oppressive techniques," but these same individuals might definitely say that they fear death (death presumably at the hands of the oppressors, as is implied by the full statement of this item). We did not fully appreciate this possibility of ambiguous readings of such "double-barreled" items at the time this study was conducted. Future work should attempt to separate the attributes asserted in such double-barreled items by constructing several items in place of the single item. In retrospect though, we do not think it inappropriate that the present study focused upon a virtually verbatim statement of Cross's

items as representative beliefs for the four stages. That is, an initial evaluation of such hypotheses should remain as faithful as possible to the original statements in order to properly say that one has given them a fair test. However, now that we have shown there is in all likelihood some general agreement regarding the existence of these "stages" and of some of the particular beliefs which characterize them, at this point it is appropriate, with regard to future work, to consider modifying the form and content of some of the items.

• *Results of Condition A and the initial sortings of Condition B.* The purpose of allowing *S*s in Condition A to form as many clusters as they wished upon their first sortings of the 28 items was to attempt to get some idea as to whether primarily four stages (clusters) would be spontaneously formed. This condition (and the initial sortings of *S*s in Condition B which placed no constraints on the number of clusters) forms the only evidence we have regarding the likelihood that these 28 items do or do not group themselves into primarily four clusters (stages). First of all, we tested to see whether the white *S*s differed from the black *S*s in the number of clusters which they formed out of these 28 items (this test ignored the particular items placed in each cluster and counted only the number of different clusters which were formed). A Kolmogorov-Smirnov 2-sample test (two-tailed) showed no significant difference between the black and white students for either Condition A ($p > .05$) or Condition B ($p > .05$). The frequencies with which the different numbers of clusters were formed in the two conditions are given in Table 6. We see from Table 6 that in Condition A, 17 of the 60 *S*s gave precisely 4 clusters in their initial sortings and 17 additional *S*s gave 5 clusters. In Condition B (first sortings only) the maximum was clearly for 5 clusters, and the second most frequent entry was for 4 clusters. This suggests two tentative conclusions. First, the hypothesis that four stages underlie the recent evolution of black awareness is *approximately* correct if we look at Condition A and more open to questions if we concentrate on Condition B results. Another possible conclusion though is that there may be several alternate routes or belief systems by which one can gain conviction in the search for black identity. The answer to the latter possibility will have to await a method for analyzing the semantic labels or reasons that the *S*s gave for why they clustered items together. This has not been accomplished as yet.

• *Other data.* Table 7 presents a summary of the frequency with which each of the 4 stages was chosen for each item by 60 *S*s in Condition B (4-cluster data only) and the 60 *S*s in Condition C. This table pools the results over black and white students.

TABLE 6

Frequency with which Students Yielded Different Number of Clusters on Their First Sortings for Conditions A and B

Experimental Condition	Number of clusters (stages) into which the 28 items were sorted																	Raw Sum
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*	*11*	*12*	*13*	*14*	*15*	*16*	*17*	
A (blacks and whites pooled)	–	–	11	17	17	4	7	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	60
B (blacks and whites pooled)	–	–	10	15	20	5	4	2	–	1	1	–	–	2	–	–	–	60

Note.—The black and white students' data were pooled because Kolmogorov-Smirnov 2-sample tests indicated no significant difference either in Condition A ($p > .05$, two-tailed) or in Condition B ($p > .05$, two-tailed).

● *Toward the construction of quantitative models.* There is a general difficulty in developmental psychology in attempting to validate the notion of "stage." We do not pretend to have solved this difficulty in the present study. But, rather than dismiss this difficult problem in a summary fashion, let us consider some of its aspects which bear on the present issues.

Suppose that what we mean by a stage *x* is that the cognitive belief system of a person who is said to be in that stage is fully characterized by a list of critical beliefs and attitudes. Let us designate these

TABLE 7

Summary of Item Responses in Conditions B and C

Item Number	Frequency with which 60 students placed this item in stages A, B, C, or D							
	Condition B				Condition C			
	A	*B*	*C*	*D*	*A*	*B*	*C*	*D*
1	55	2	1	2	52	4	2	2
2	58	0	0	2	58	2	0	0
3	53	3	1	3	53	5	2	0
4	57	1	0	2	58	1	1	0
5	56	1	0	3	56	1	1	2
6	56	1	0	3	55	2	1	1
7	28	15	5	12	35	8	5	11
8	1	14	34	11	1	9	45	4
9	0	16	28	15	1	28	14	16
10	9	35	12	4	12	26	20	2
11	1	15	19	24	0	28	7	25
12	1	15	37	7	0	5	45	10
13	2	20	29	8	1	8	47	4
14	2	18	23	17	6	11	39	4
15	0	22	28	10	0	6	49	5
16	1	21	32	6	1	10	46	3
17	4	18	27	11	5	13	35	7
18	5	12	18	24	3	14	18	25
19	1	11	18	30	3	7	15	35
20	1	15	31	13	0	13	27	20
21	2	13	31	14	0	16	26	18
22	2	23	7	28	5	11	16	28
23	0	18	31	11	0	30	16	13
24	3	18	15	24	3	16	12	29
25	2	11	14	33	2	9	11	28
26	4	5	11	40	4	2	4	50
27	1	12	15	31	1	4	4	51
28	0	4	24	32	0	1	12	47

Note.—In each condition the white and black students' responses have been combined. A description of each item is to be found in Table 2. In rare cases an item did not get recorded; this accounts for the fact that some of the frequencies sum to 59. In each condition the modal frequency is underlined. Items 9, 11, and 23 show the modals for different stages indicating one of the differences produced by the conditions. The tendency for items which share the same modal category to have a higher modal frequency in Condition C is seen in this table.

particular beliefs and attitudes by the symbols *e, f,* and *g*. Notice that by this definition it does not imply that this person cannot hold other beliefs as well. Thus, if we wish to exclude the possibility that a person in stage *x* does not believe statements *h, i,* and *j,* then we must modify the above definition to read: a person is said to be in stage *x* if he fully endorses or believes all items *e, f,* and *g* and fully rejects all items *h, i,* and *j*. (Notice again that this person can believe many other things other than *e, f,* and *g*.) Now, consider another person who is said to be in a later stage *y* (or it can be the same person who is seen at a much later time). In this *later* stage, we shall say that a person is said to be in this stage providing he fully endorses items *h, i,* and *j* and fully rejects items *e, f,* and *g*. In terms of the sorting task, such a definition of stages would require that all experimental *S*s would invariably place items *e, f,* and *g* together in the first cluster and would never place either *h, i,* or *j* in the first cluster but instead would invariably place them together in a *separate* cluster. In terms of the modal response concept, this conception of stages would require that 100% of the *S*s place a *particular* item into just *one* stage (for example, item *f* would have all frequencies in a single stage and would have a frequency of *zero* for every other stage). Some other items may *not* be indicative of any particular stage, and these items might very well show an *even* distribution of frequencies in every "stage." In terms of our present results (see Table 3 and Table 7) items 1 through 7 seem to come closest to satisfying this type of conception, but inasmuch as not all items have this pattern, we must reject this particular definition of "stages" in terms of the present data.

A second possibility in defining the idea of a stage is as follows. Suppose that a person really can be said to be in some particular stage *x* (at a particular point in time) but that one can *never point to any critically defining attributes* which will unambiguously guarantee the existence of the cognitive stage. In this sense, the attributes or beliefs which a person in stage *x* will endorse are only probabilistically determined. (That is, all the items will tend to have some positive entry for each stage, and no stage will "attract" all the frequencies.) Our data, by and large, seem to fit this conception quite nicely. What is needed in order to account for the additional aspect of our data which we have called the generalization gradient is to suppose that one can represent the stages as ideal points in some dimensional space and that in this same space one can represent the test items as points. With this dimensional representation, one can account for both the probabilistic features of the data and the magnitudes for each of the probabilistic entries. It would take us too far afield to test this idea out in full detail here since it would involve developing precise mathematical statements of the assumptions of the model although we do hope to present this conception elsewhere.

There is yet a third type of model that can be distinguished. Here the notion of stage is regarded as merely a convenient label attached to a cluster of beliefs which tend to occur together in time and very gradually merge into another set of beliefs at some later point in time. We believe this notion fails to account for the persistent regularities in peoples' judgments about which items belong together.

Conclusions

There are two major shortcomings to this study. First, the research dealt with verbalizations and not directly with the way people feel, and yet the identity stages themselves are intensely personal experiences. Secondly, black college students in general and black college students in particular at this institution (Princeton University) are not typical of American black people. We considered it reasonable, however, that verbal statements would be related to the way people feel and that black college students even at this institution would have experienced some of the same aspects of black living as other black people. It is a worn joke that psychologists in their research articles generalize from the omnipresent "college sophomore" to people in general in studying human traits and their relationships, and we need to be cautious. Although the stages in black identity hypothesized by Cross were confirmed in our study of black college students at this institution, results should be replicated with a sample more representative of the black population before the stages could be confirmed in a definitive way.

The plausibility of Cross's hypothesis concerning the existence of several stages in the development of black awareness in America has received general positive support. However, some details of Cross's hypothesis, such as which *particular* items are indicative of particular stages, were found to be in need of modification. In addition, the precise statement of some items may lead to ambiguous readings and for this reason need to be restated or elaborated in greater detail.

The existence of a generalization gradient was argued to provide support for Cross's position that the four underlying stages occur in a definite order (the order being pre-encounter, encounter, immersion, and internalization). This is the order suggested originally by Cross.

There is a pronounced tendency for white students to perceive these stages and the items which characterize each stage in much the same manner that black students perceive them. However, a few significant differences between blacks and whites in response to particular items were noted.

There was an impressive similarity in sorting patterns across experimental conditions (Conditions B and C) which argues for the general robustness of the underlying conception—i.e., the results are fairly replicable under rather different testing conditions. In this regard, it is worth pointing out that the fact that a generalization gradient can still be found even for the condition (Condition C) which provided the *S*s with semantic labels for and descriptions of each of the stages argues for the nontriviality of the sorting task. That is, had this condition resulted in the unique placement of every item into precisely one stage (with 100% agreement among *S*s as to which stage each item belonged in), we would have then been open to the criticism that *S*s were simply matching items to a category where both items and the categories to which they belonged were simply part of the common knowledge of the population. The fact that this did not occur whether within or across conditions argues for the meaningfulness of the judgments made in the experiment.

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